



## **Classifying, documenting, celebrating co-curricular student engagement: Organizational service innovation**

Sharon Prado, Director of Strategic Academic Initiatives, University College Dublin  
[sharon.prado@ucd.ie]

Teresa Lee, Program Manager, University College Dublin [teresa.lee@ucd.ie]

**Keywords:** Active citizenship, higher education, Ireland, strategic planning

**Conference track:** Contexts and methods: Theoretical and conceptual frameworks, research designs, and methodological issues

**Format:** Poster presentation

### **Summary**

University College Dublin (UCD), one of the largest universities in Ireland, involves students, faculty and staff in partnership and community engagement across a broad spectrum of activities. The University has identified the development of ‘active citizenship’ and engagement amongst its student population as a strategic goal. The strategic plan sets out targets for the proportion of students the university expects to be actively involved in community engagement, sports or university societies at the

end of the plans' lifetime. The University proposes achieving its targets by means of "encouraging, accrediting and rewarding student volunteering, leadership and active citizenship."

To support its objective of developing student engagement and active citizenship, the University is in the process of collating data on all its current activities and is developing a system to record these and future activities. The system will consist of: a database to record all engagement activities of students, faculty and staff; the existing student information system; and web-to-database interface to connect end-users and multiple stakeholders with the systems, to provide recording and reporting tools for university administration.

An outcome of the partnership will be improved integration of higher education students in voluntary capacities in informal experiential learning in industry and improved integration and engagement between higher education students and the community sector. Each stakeholder gains access to a tool to interact with volunteers in their organization, track volunteer activity, match volunteers with volunteer opportunities, and other functionality to be identified. Universities will get a tool that creates a national standard for defining, tracking and assessing and recognizing this activity mapped to international standards. All higher education institutions will have the capability to accurately report on students' active citizenship engagement—the inherent value in the activities, as well as to the economy.

## References

Bailie, L. (2009, October). *Conference of European statisticians task force on measuring volunteer work: Status report and recommendation*. Prepared for the 1<sup>st</sup> Meeting of the 2009/2010 Bureau, Washington, DC. Retrieved from <http://www.unece.org/fileadmin/DAM/stats/documents/ece/ces/bur/2009/mtg1/14.add.1.e.pdf>.

International Labour Organization. (2008, November - December). *Manual on the measurement of volunteer work*. Prepared for the 18<sup>th</sup> International Conference of Labour Statisticians, Geneva, Switzerland. Retrieved from [http://www.ilo.org/global/statistics-and-databases/meetings-and-events/international-conference-of-labour-statisticians/WCMS\\_092024/lang--en/index.htm](http://www.ilo.org/global/statistics-and-databases/meetings-and-events/international-conference-of-labour-statisticians/WCMS_092024/lang--en/index.htm).

United Nations. (2003). *Handbook of national accounting: Handbook on non-profit institutions in the system of national accounts*. New York: United Nations.